

# Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Made simple for all to understand



UNIVERSAL  
DECLARATION  
OF HUMAN  
RIGHTS

Dignity and justice for all of us

**1 Dignity**—From the day we are born, we are free and should all be treated in the same way as everyone else. We can think for ourselves and understand what is right and wrong. We should be friendly towards one another.

**2 Equality**—The rights in this Declaration belong to all of us: to girls as well as boys, to women as well as men. They belong to all of us whatever our skin colour, to everyone even if we speak a different language, or have different ideas and beliefs or a different religion. They belong to the poor as well as the rich, to people from ordinary families as well as from powerful families. They belong to everyone, even if we come from another country. It makes no difference whether our country is independent or not.

**3 Life**—We all have the right to live, and to be free and to be safe from harm.

**4 Slavery**—Nobody should treat us as a slave and we should not make anyone else a slave.

**5 Torture**—Nobody should torture us or treat us cruelly or punish us in a way that makes us feel humiliated.

**6 Law**—The law should make sure that all of us can claim our human rights through the law; nobody should be left out.

**7 Law**—We should all be protected by the law in the same way as everyone else. The law should be the same for everyone; it should be applied in the same way to all of us.

**8 Law**—We should all be able to ask for help from people who know about the law when our rights under the law are not respected.

**9 Prison**—Nobody should hold us or put us in prison or send us to another country unjustly or without good reason.

**10 Justice**—If somebody accuses one of us of breaking the law, the matter should be decided at a trial open to other people. The people who decide should not let themselves be influenced by others; they should decide only from what is shown to be true or not true.

**11 Justice**—If any of us is accused of a crime, we should be treated as innocent until it can be proved that we are guilty at a fair trial. Each of us should always be allowed to defend ourselves. Nobody should condemn us or punish us for something we have not done.

**12 Privacy**—Nobody should be allowed to say bad or untrue things about us, enter our house, open our letters, or bother us or our family without a good reason.

**13 Movement**—We should all be able to move around as we wish within our country. We should be able to leave our country to go to another one; and we should be able to return to our country if we want.

**14 Refugees**—If someone tries to hurt one of us, we may run away to another country and ask to be protected. But we cannot escape if we, ourselves, have done bad things like harm someone else or not respect human rights.

**15 Nationality**—We should all be allowed to belong to a country. Nobody can prevent us, without a good reason, from belonging to our country or to a different country if we wish.

**16 Marriage**—As soon as we are old enough, each of us can marry and start a family if we want. We cannot be stopped from doing this because of the colour of our skin, the country we come from or our religion. Men and women have the same rights when they are married and also if they are separated. Nobody should force us to marry someone we do not want to marry. The government and people of our country should protect our family and everyone in it.

**17 Property**—We are all allowed to own things and nobody is allowed to take our belongings away from us without a good reason.

**18 Religion**—We are all free to believe in our own religion, to change our religion, and to practise it either by ourselves or with other people.

**19 Expression**—We are all free to think what we want to think and to say what we want to say. Nobody should forbid us from doing this. We should also be able to share our ideas—with people from our own or any other country.

**20 Assembly**—We should all be able to get together with other people for peaceful purposes or to join in meetings in a peaceful way. It is wrong to force someone to belong to a group.

**21 Democracy**—We should all be able to take part in how our country is run either by choosing someone who has the same ideas as we do to speak for us or by trying to be chosen ourselves to speak for others.

Governments should be chosen regularly by asking the people what they think in an election. In the election, we should all get a vote and all our votes should have the same value. We do not have to tell others who we voted for if we do not want to.

We all have the same right as anyone else to work for the public service.

**22 Social Security**—As members of society, we should be able to try to build a good life for ourselves and to make the most of the good things that life has to offer. If one of us is struggling for some reason, we should all join together to help as much as we can.

**23 Work**—We should all be able to work and be free to choose which job we want to do. We should be treated well by our bosses and get paid enough so that we can look after our family. If we lose our job, the Government should help us until we can find another one. If a man and a woman do the same type of work, they should each get the same pay.

Everyone who works can join together, if they like, to defend their interests.

**24 Rest**—Each work day should not be too long, since everyone has the right to rest and should be able to take regular paid holidays.

**25 Want**—We should all have enough of what we need so that each of us and our families do not fall ill, do not go hungry and have clothes and a house. We should all be helped if we cannot find a job, if we get sick or are hurt, if we are old, if our wife or husband is dead, or if we do not earn a living for any other reason we cannot choose.

Mothers and children should get special help. All children should be treated the same, whether or not their parents are married.

**26 Education**—We should all be able to go to learn things. Everyone, especially the small children, should go to school. No one should have to pay to go to primary school. We should all be able to learn a skill or continue our studies as far as we wish.

At school, we should be able to develop all our talents and should be taught about human rights and how to get on with others, whatever their skin colour, religion or the country they come from.

Our parents should be able to choose how and what we will be taught at school.

**27 Culture**—We should be able to share in our community's cultural life, to enjoy the arts and to benefit from new discoveries in science, and any good they do. If we create something special, like write a book or paint a picture, should be able to benefit from it and no one else should be able to steal our ideas.

**28 Peace**—So that we can enjoy the rights we have been reading about in this Declaration, people should be able to live in peace, both within our communities and between countries.

**29 Community**—We all have to play our part in the community so that we can enjoy the benefits of a good life.

The law should make sure we can enjoy our human rights in harmony with everyone else. It should allow everyone to respect others and to be respected.

**30** No one can use this Declaration to justify destroying the rights of others by claiming that they are just trying to protect their own rights. It is never OK to destroy the rights of others.



In 2008, we are celebrating the 60th birthday of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In the Declaration, all of the countries of the world got together and agreed on the most important things that we should all have so that we can have happy lives. These are called our human rights. They belong to all of us because we are human beings.

The Universal Declaration is special in Cambodia because it is protected in the Constitution. This means that everyone in Cambodia should be able to enjoy their basic human rights.

The real declaration uses words that most kids find difficult to understand. Here we have written out the basic ideas in simple words that everyone can all understand.



United Nations  
Human Rights

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS